
NEW DOG BREEDS RECOGNIZED BY THE FCI

The FCI (Fédération Cynologique Internationale), the World Canine Organization, includes 86 member countries and contract partners (one member per country). Each issues its own pedigrees and trains its own judges. The FCI ensures that the pedigrees and judges are mutually recognized by all FCI members.

Recognition of a breed by the FCI means that in almost every European country, that breed can be awarded FCI championship prizes. One of the newly recognized breeds is the:

Taiwan Dog **(Formosan Dog, Formosa Mountain Dog,** **Taiwanese Native Dog)**

The name Taiwan Dog is used by many European countries. In Asia, Formosan Dog or Formosan Mountain Dog is usually used. The breed is not yet recognized by the AKC.

TAIWAN DOG

(Formosan Dog, Formosa Mountain Dog, Taiwanese Native Dog)

text and illustrations by RIA HÖRTER

ATAYAL TRIBE



The Taiwan Dog's practical value is now as a hunting dog, watchdog and companion dog. (Photo: www.dogs.com.tw.)

In 1987, I travelled to the Far East and visited Taiwan. I wrote in my travel journal: *When crossing the streets in Taipei, a city with millions of people, cars and motorbikes, I prefer to walk very close behind an old Chinese man or woman. There are many and they survive the dangerous crossings. Taxi drivers are driving as though they were mad, and they love it when they see that I'm not afraid. 'No problem, don't worry miss,' they say. 'Only first class drivers in Taipei. Second class all dead.'*

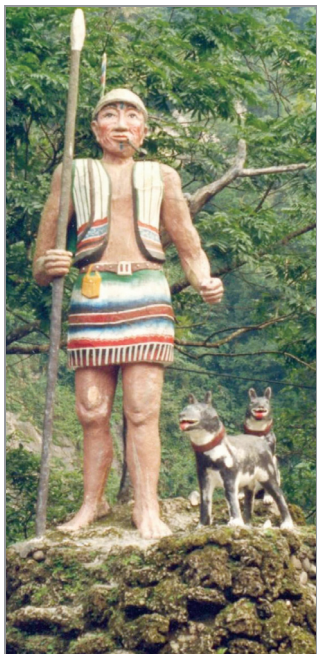
As in any other country, I looked for dogs on the streets, but in Taiwan I did not see a single one. During my excursions to the countryside and mountains, however, I noticed some dogs playing or sleeping in the gardens in front of the small houses. At that time, I could not put a label on them, but now I would say they were Taiwan Dogs.

The first time I noticed that dogs were used for hunting on Formosa – the official name of Taiwan until 1945 – was in Wulai, in the northern part of the country, where I saw a large wooden statue of an Ataya hunter with his two dogs. The Atayal tribe forms nearly 25 percent of the Taiwanese aboriginal population.

About 5,000 years ago, Austronesian-speaking farmers migrated from the mainland to Taiwan, taking their languages and habits, as well as their dogs, the so-called pariah dogs. Not surprisingly, the pure Taiwan Dog is a descendant of South Asian hunting dogs.

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A wooden statue in Wulai shows a member of the Atayal tribe with his hunting dogs. Many tribes on Formosa were known as hunters and warriors. (Photo: Ria Hörter.)

PUREBRED DOGS

About 5,000 years ago, Austronesian-speaking farmers migrated from the mainland to Taiwan, taking their languages and habits, as well as their dogs, the so-called pariah dogs. Not surprisingly, the pure Taiwan Dog is a descendant of South Asian hunting dogs. In a study about the dogs of 29 Taiwanese tribes, the National University of Taiwan, the Japanese Gifu University and a team from Nagoya University proved that the Taiwan Dog is related to other breeds in the region. The breed resembles the Kishu, Shikoku, Kai, Hokkaido Inu, Shiba Inu and Akita Inu, all Japanese breeds.

There was a period when the Taiwan Dog multiplied in the mountains as a half-wild animal. Because of oppression by various colonial powers, cross-breeding with other types of dogs took place. By the mid-20th century, it was nearly impossible to find purebred Taiwan Dogs.

In this article I use the name Taiwan Dog, but in literature, Formosan (Mountain) Dog is mostly used.

COLONIAL PERIOD

The official name of Taiwan is Republic of China (ROC), not to be confused with the People's Republic of China (the mainland). Taiwan consists of one large island and a number of smaller islands situated close to the mainland. The original inhabitants were various Austronesian tribes, related to other peoples in East Asia. These aboriginal tribes supported themselves by hunting and fishing.

In the 16th century, the Portuguese named the island Formosa, meaning "beautiful island." The Dutch East India Company settled on the island in 1624, followed by the Spanish in 1626, until their fortress fell to the Dutch in 1642. In 1662, the Dutch were driven out by a Ming loyalist who used the island as a base for raids on the mainland. The island was annexed by the Qing Dynasty in 1683.

Between 1662 and 1895, large numbers of Han Chinese emigrated to the island from the mainland and quickly assimilated the native population.

TAIWAN, "A DISLOYAL PROVINCE OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA"

When China lost the First Sino-Japanese War (1894-95), Taiwan

became war booty for the Japanese Empire. The Taiwanese and aborigines endured harsh Japanese rule until 1945, when Taiwan became part of China again.

In 1949, when the Communists on the mainland founded the People's Republic of China, the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek made Taipei their temporary capital and evacuated approximately 700,000 members of the Chinese elite, and 800,000 soldiers, to Taiwan. They considered themselves the continuation of the Republic of China; but the Communists on the mainland named Taiwan "a disloyal province of the People's Republic of China."

Martial law and one-party rule continued until the late 1980s, when Taiwan began developing into a more democratic country, but most of the international community still does not officially recognize Taiwan as an independent state.

Taiwan has over 23 million inhabitants; about 98 percent are Han Chinese and the rest are divided among more than 50 tribes. The official language is Mandarin; the country has freedom of religion.



"Savage yonth" should be "aboriginal youth." In this period name of the breed was Formosan (Mountain) Dog. The dog on the left has a German Shepherd expression.

DISASTROUS EVENTS

In 1976, Dr. Sung Yung-yi of the National University of Taiwan did an investigation into the origin of the Taiwan Dog and concluded that there were four disastrous events in the history of the breed. First was the 17th-century Dutch settlement, when settlers bred their hunting dogs to the Taiwan Dog. At the same time, the aboriginal people were forbidden to own dogs and, according to Dr. Sung Yung-yi, large numbers of native dogs were slaughtered. The second event was the Japanese occupation (1895-1945), when remote villages were moved in order to get the native population as close as possible to the Japanese administration, and Japanese immigrants exploring the east coast of Taiwan bred their dogs to the Taiwan Dog.

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The third event took place at the end of the Second World War. Japanese soldiers guarding the east coast of the country to prevent a military intervention by the United States had army dogs, especially German Shepherds, that mingled with Taiwan Dogs. At the end of the Japanese occupation, aborigines frequently organized attacks and sent their dogs after the military dogs. As a reprisal, the Japanese soldiers shot every Taiwan Dog they came across.

In 1949, the arrival of hundreds of thousands of Chinese in Taiwan almost finished the Taiwan Dog. Dr. Sung Yung-yi is of the opinion that in this period, the Taiwan Dog was closer to extinction than ever before. One of the reasons was that the Chinese belonging to Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party ate dog meat, thus native dogs. Before 1949, dog consumption was hardly known in Taiwan. In 2001, the consumption of dog meat and the use of dog fur for clothing were banned, although in some remote areas, it is still possible to find dog meat.

Those four events were the reason that, by the second half of the 20th century, the Taiwan Dog was nearly extinct and very few purebred dogs were left.

At that time, the Taiwan Dog was a half-wild animal – very intelligent and versatile. Bitches sought out hidden places to whelp their litters and after a few months turned up with their puppies. The Taiwan Dog hunted its own food. For the Japanese, this half-wild state was a reason to name them “barbarian dogs.” Under the pretext of national health, they killed hundreds of dogs.

180,000 STRAY DOGS

The modern Taiwan Dog differs from the dogs in old pictures of the aborigines. The reason is that crossings with other dogs, often stray dogs, because of genetic deviations and unstable temperaments due to the small gene pool led to slight variations in appearance, and both problems were a constant threat to the survival of the breed. A study of the Veterinary Faculty of the Taiwan University showed that, in 2004, about 180,000 stray dogs were living in Taiwan. In 2006, 12,318 dogs were caught in and around the city of Taipei. Unfortunately, impulsive purchases, little knowledge of how to care for a dog, and the depression in 2008, added greatly to the endangered status of the Taiwan Dog.

In 1976, various Taiwanese ecologists began trying to convince the government that the Taiwan Dog should be preserved, and it was again Dr. Sung who took action. Between 1976 and 1980, he and some colleagues tried to find sufficient examples for his study. Dr. Sung visited 29 aboriginal villages and found 160 dogs of whom 46 (25 males and 21 females) were qualified as purebred. Blood tests proved their relation to dogs living in southern Japan. Because of the small number of purebred dogs, the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) was alarmed that

the breed was very close to extinction.

The tireless Dr. Sung wanted – at all costs – to convince the government of the significance of the Taiwan Dog, but there was little cooperation from the authorities, which brought Dr. Sung to the somewhat cynical pronouncement that, “Taiwan may be seen as an advanced country, but not yet in this subject.”

CHEN MING-NAN

Chen Ming-nan is a well-known breeder with a status of almost mythical proportions. In the 1960s when Chen was a 10-year-old boy, his father gave him a native dog, a black puppy. Chen Ming-nan named him Terry. Although Terry ran away within a year and did not come back, this little dog formed the beginning of the boy's affection for the Taiwan Dog.

During Chen's military service, he got the idea of starting “something with the Taiwan Dog.” Being a soldier, he already had some experience with the education and training of army dogs. Chen travelled throughout the country, especially in the areas where aborigines lived, and bought 18 dogs. In the end, not one of them stood the test of time and they went back to their former owners. As adults, they lacked a smooth coat and were stout rather than lean.

Beginning in the 1980s, it took Chen Ming-nan about 11 years to find three suitable dogs to start a breeding program. We know their names: Hsiao Wu Fong (a black male), Black Spirit (female) and Hunter (a brindle bitch). The name of the foundation sire – Hsiao Wu Fong – became the kennel prefix. Hsiao Wu Fong was depicted on gold and silver coins on the occasion of the Chinese Year of the Dog, and is on the cover of the book *Precious Dogs of Taiwan* (published by Yiu Hua Books).

He was also a hero. One day when Chen was out for a walk and was held up by two men, Hsiao Wu Fong did not hesitate to attack the robbers, who fled.

SUCCESS HAS MANY FATHERS

Out of necessity, Chen started breeding on the flat roof of an apartment building, but after a short time he realized that the location did not help his dogs gain strength and working qualities, so he rented a piece of hilly landscape on Tahu Road in Yingo, not far from Taipei.

The media paid a lot of attention to Chen Ming-nan, and his “Formosan Dogs” got a lot of publicity, especially the bitch Moon Howler, the only dog that lived in the house. It is said that she could communicate with Chen. If he kept a number in mind, Moon Howler barked that number.

The *China Daily News* (1994, 1995 and 1996) and the *United Daily News* (1997) published articles about the origin and qualities of Chen's dogs. In general, these stories corresponded with other sources but, as we know, success has many fathers.



*Breeders know that they work with a piece of cultural heritage that has to be protected.
(Photo: Chuan-Shun Lin.)*

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Hsiao Wu Fong, the foundation sire of Chen Ming-nan's kennel.

Chen loved his dogs so much that he tried to establish a Taiwan Dog Museum. He gave up his job in a shoe factory and devoted the rest of his life to the development of a pure-bred Taiwan Dog.

TRAINING

Because his training space was limited, Chen would tie the prey to a bamboo stick, so the dogs had to jump. From time to time, he travelled

with his dogs to the aborigines in the mountains to test the dogs' hunting abilities and limberness. After all, the aborigines had been hunting for centuries with the Taiwan Dog. In those days, the dogs worked as a team and lived by the law of the jungle.

When working, the Taiwan Dog uses its nose as well as its ears. They frequently fought with the prey and relied on their skill, strength and intelligence.

GUARD DOGS AND RESCUE DOGS

The aborigines used the Taiwan Dog for hunting, but in recent years it has acquired many other tasks. The Taiwanese army and air force both train the breed as watchdogs for munition depots and military planes, as well as rescue dogs. Previously, guard and rescue work was done by German Shepherds, but according to dog trainers, the Taiwan Dog possesses superior qualities of smell, hearing and alertness when it comes to strangers – they bark sooner and attack faster. When working, they are more resistant to harsh conditions.

There is still some hesitation by Taiwan Dog breeders to promote their dogs, preferring to sell them (mostly males) to other breeders who visit local dog shows. Too-close breeding is still a concern, but anyhow they keep the breed pure.

The Taiwan Dog is suitable for many sports such as agility, but is not suited to be simply a family dog. It has a half-wild history and demands a great deal of physical and mental attention.

THE BREED STANDARD

The Taiwan dog is classified in FCI Group 5, Spitz and primitive types, Section 7, "Primitive type – Hunting Dogs. Without working trail." Because Taiwan is not recognized by many countries, the breed's patronage lies with Japan. The original valid

standard, published in 2004, was based on old photographs and other available sources.

The Taiwan Dog is medium-sized and sinewy with a triangular head, thin prick ears and a sickle tail. This bold and fearless breed is extremely faithful to its master.

The head is broad and roundish, the skull slightly longer than the muzzle. The well-defined stop has a slight furrow. The muzzle tapers a little from base to nose, but is not pointed at the tip. The almond-shaped eyes are dark brown in color; the prick ears are set on the sides of the skull at a 45-degree angle. The neck is muscular, strong, slightly arched and without dewlap.

The workman-like body is muscular and nearly square in shape. The back is straight and short, loins firmly muscled. The chest is fairly deep, but does not reach the elbow. Ribs are well-sprung and the belly is well tucked up. The sickle tail is set on high and carried erect, with the tip curving forward.

A WORKING DOG

The Taiwan Dog is a working dog in every respect: forequarters and hindquarters are well-muscled. The elbows are close to the body, the pasterns firm. The upper thighs are broad, sloping and well-bent at the stifle. The feet, which turn neither in nor out, have firm, thick pads.

Movement is as one might expect of a working dog: powerful with reaching stride. This breed is agile enough to easily and quickly turn 180 degrees.

The short, hard coat lies tight to the body and comes in many colors: black, brindle, fawn, white, white-and-black, white-and-fawn, and white-and-brindle.

The height at the withers is 19-20 inches (48-52 centimeters) for males, and 17-18.5 inches (43-47 centimeters) for females. They weigh between 26 and 39 pounds (12-18 kilograms).

Faults are: shyness, level bite, protruding eyes, too-straight front and rear angulations, and oversize or undersize. Eliminating faults are: aggression, excessive shyness, overshoot or undershot bite, ears not prick, hair exceeding 1.75 inches (4.5 centimeters), a missing canine tooth, a curled tail, and clearly showing physical or behavioral abnormalities.

Breeders know that they work with a piece of cultural heritage that has to be protected. Appearance and temperament should go hand in hand; the Taiwan Dog's practical value is now as a hunting dog, watchdog and companion dog.



The Taiwan Dog comes in many colors. This brindle-coated dog is six months old. (Photo: Yugan Dali)